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THE ANTI-UNION.

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TO THE
EDITORS OF THE ANTI-UNION.

Nulli fas—sub jungere gentem.

VIRG. ÆNEID.

GENTLEMEN,

IMPELLED by the energy of that sentiment which every man *must* feel when he believes that his best interests, always inseparably connected with the freedom and independence of his country, are about to be disposed of for ever, I cannot help soliciting permission through your publication to submit to my countrymen, some thoughts on the great subject which now occupies, I may say, agonizes, the mind of the Irish public. The subject of a legislative Union with Great Britain, has been treated in many different points of view, by the ingenious correspondents of your paper, as well as by that host of writers, who, on this agitating measure, have given their thoughts to the public. Wit has ridiculed and declamation inveighed against it; eloquence has exhausted all its stores in developing the calamities by which it must be followed; and the pride, the passions, the indignation of the country, have risen to repel the indignity of the measure. Every topic which could furnish an argument against it has been resorted to and many of them have been exhausted, while that, which in my mind, affords the best ground on which reason can take her stand against it, has been adverted to but with a casual glance. I mean its incompatibility with the constitution of the country, and the incompetence of any legislation without the express consent of the nation to effect it.—“*Who shall dispose of the kingdom of Ireland?*” “*Who has a RIGHT to abolish its independence—to annul its constitution—and to submit the property, liberty, and lives of its people to the absolute dominion of another country?*” These are questions which I conceive have not yet been fully discussed, though their importance one might think would have obtained for them the first place in the public mind. They are not the questions of party; they relate not to little measures of finance, of regulation, or of commerce; they are questions which *now* concern the very existence of Ireland; and relate to a measure, which, like the immensity of space, or the infinity of duration, comprehends within its capacious womb, every object that can interest a people, or affect the interest and happiness of individuals. They are questions which must be considered *NOW* or *NEVER*; for if the present moment be suffered to pass away, the lapse of

future ages may not present another opportunity to consider them: *TO DAY* it is PUBLIC VIRTUE to discuss them—*TO-MORROW* the discussion may be TREASON; and the infamy and penalties of REBELLION, will await that tardy virtue which if exerted in time, would have ensured the gratitude and admiration of posterity.

At such a moment as this every man should throw his mite of intellect into the public stock. I shall therefore discharge *my* duty by submitting to my countrymen the two following propositions, which if I am not deceived, admit of demonstration as complete, as any moral proposition is capable of receiving. I say then, first, That the measure of a legislative Union, in such terms as we are taught to expect, would be a surrender of the constitution; and consequently, of the liberty and independence of this country;—and secondly, That the parliament of Ireland will be guilty of an act of usurpation, if they assume a power to enact such an Union without the express consent of the people of Ireland.

The dangerous and dark principles which the abstract rights of man afford me, might make the proof of these propositions a matter of great facility; but I reject them; I shall resort to no principles which have not been recognized by the British constitution, and inculcated by those illustrious men who have developed and explained it; I discard the levelling and revolutionary principles of the French system, and disclaim as unconstitutional and unsafe, *every* principle which would invest the mob with supreme power.

An UNION then, I say, would be a surrender of the constitution. To examine this proposition, it is necessary we should consider, first, what is meant by “Constitution,” and particularly the constitution of this country;—and in the second place, what is meant by a “Legislative Union.”—Constitution, then, when used in a political sense, I understand, to mean “that system of primitive or fundamental principles according to which the frame of the respective government was first formed, and by which it must continue to be regulated”—By the “British constitution, which is also that of Ireland; I mean that system of primitive or fundamental principles on which *OUR* government is formed, and according to which, so long as our constitution lasts, it must be conducted.” Thus it is not this or that particular law, nor any certain number of laws, nor all the laws on the statute books which form the constitution; for if it was any, or a certain number, or all of these which form it, then the repeal of that particular statute, or the repeal of any of that certain number of statutes, or the repeal or enactment of any statute, would be an alteration, if not an abolition of the constitution itself. But it is evident

that no such repeal, &c. is considered as a change of the constitution; it must, therefore, be the original principles on which the common law rests; those principles which govern the legislature in the enactment of every statute; those principles, in a word, on which the legislature itself is framed; it must be those that form the constitution. Thus, if by mistake or undue influence, the legislature could be persuaded to enact a law inconsistent with any of these first principles, that law would be unconstitutional; such, for instance, would be a law empowering his Majesty or his minister to take the property of the subject, or to confine his person, or to dispose of his life, at his will and pleasure. Thus, also, if the legislature, of its own authority, should abolish the monarchy, the government which they should establish in its place, would be unconstitutional: Such for instance, was the protectorate of Cromwell.

What then, are those premature and fundamental principles? The civil and political liberty of the subject, I conceive to be the first and chief. It includes the right of the subject to be bound by no laws but those to which he assents, either expressly by the representative whom he elects, or virtually by the representative who is chosen by that description of his countrymen which the law considers most likely to make a wise choice for the general good. This too, includes the political independence of the state; for if the state were dependent on another power, then this right of the subject to be bound by no laws but those to which he assented either expressly or virtually, as above, could not exist. He would be bound by laws made neither by him, nor his representative, nor the representative of any description of his countrymen, but by that paramount state. A country thus subordinate or dependent on another cannot be said to have any constitution. America had none before the assertion of her independence—Ireland had none while she was bound by British statutes.

Subordinate to this first great principle of the constitution, and calculated to give it permanency and effect, is another, namely, that the supreme power of the state shall reside in a legislative body consisting of three members—the chief executive magistrate, a house of peers created by him, and a house of representatives chosen by the people, or a certain description of them.

That these are radical principles of the constitution, I might cite innumerable authorities to shew, but as I believe they will not be controverted, it would be an idle parade to prove them by reference. Supposing, therefore, until the contrary be proved, which I am convinced, cannot be done, that the constitution is such as I have described it, and that it depends on the two great principles, the civil and political liberty of the people, including the right of self-government, and national independence; and also, on the disposition of the supreme power among the three branches of the legislature, namely, a King, and two Houses of Parliament; the one consisting of Irish Peers, the other consisting of members returned by certain qualified classes

of the Irish people; let us now see what is meant by a legislative Union with Great Britain.

An Union then means, that two of those three branches of the constitutional legislature shall be abolished for ever; that there shall never be, hereafter, an Irish House of Peers, or an Irish House of Commons; and that the people of Ireland shall, henceforward, be governed by the King, and Parliament of Great Britain, encreased by the addition of a few Peers and Commoners sent from Ireland. Of these Irish representatives, the number must be such as to bear a very small proportion to the Peers or Commons of Great Britain; of course they must, in all cases, be unable to procure the enactment of any measure which they may think beneficial to Ireland, or to prevent the enactment of any measure which they may know to be injurious to its interest, or destructive of its rights.

I say, therefore, that an Union surrenders this great and vital principle of the constitution; that the people of Ireland shall be governed by a King, and two houses of Parliament; the one consisting of Irish Peers, the other of Irish Commoners. I say, also, that by giving up this constitutional mode of government, it subjugates Ireland to the absolute and uncontrollable dominion of the British Parliament. But when one country is subject to the absolute and uncontrollable power of another country, it ceases to be free or independent; its citizens no longer enjoy civil or political liberty; the people of Ireland, therefore, in case they submit to an Union, will immediately cease to be governed by laws to which they have either actually, or virtually consented by their representatives; they will cease to enjoy civil or political liberty; and therefore, an Union, I say, is a complete surrender of the constitution of Ireland, inasmuch as it surrenders the two great principles of which that constitution consists.

I conceive I have thus fully established, the first of the propositions which I undertook to prove, namely, that an Union would be a complete surrender of the constitution, and consequently, of the liberty and independence of the country. But two objections are made to this proof. First, that though Ireland, in case of an Union, would lose the form of her constitution, yet she would retain the substantial benefits of it; for she would be represented in the British Parliament, and would enjoy all the freedom, civil and political, that would be enjoyed by Great Britain, herself. I answer, it is a fallacy. First, Ireland's being represented in the British Parliament, would be perfectly immaterial—she would derive no benefit, whatsoever, from that representation; because, though her representatives were perfectly virtuous, and entirely unanimous on every question, yet the paucity of their members, would render any question or vote of theirs for Ireland, nugatory; and as to this country enjoying the same freedom and privileges as England, I say it is neither *certain*, nor *likely*, nor, I will add, *possible*, that she should do so. It is not certain, because the united legislature might

if they should think it for the benefit of the empire at large, deprive this particular part of it of many privileges which they rest of the empire should continue to enjoy. They might establish universally the mode of trial now established in the disturbed counties; that is, repeal the trial by jury. They might repeal, as to this country, the Habeas Corpus Act; or, under different pretences, perpetuate the suspension of it from year to year. It is not *likely* that Ireland would enjoy the same freedom, because being completely under the dominion of Great Britain, it is highly probable, the latter would act then towards her in the same way, and on the same principles, as she has heretofore done; but heretofore, it has undeniably been the policy of Great Britain to restrain the liberty, to cramp the commerce, and to narrow the constitutional privileges of this country. If it be said, she formerly did so from fear of a separation, should Ireland become too powerful, but that she would do so no longer, because the incorporation of the two countries would render a separation impracticable; I answer—the argument is founded on a false assumption; for the legislative incorporation would not make a separation impracticable; because, 1st. the great body of the Irish people would, notwithstanding an Union, preserve their distinct religion, their present habits of life, and thinking, their present love for freedom, their longing for political power and independence. 2d, their insular situation, and local separation from Great Britain, would then, because it must *ever*, continue to suggest a desire and ambition of separate and independent government. 3d, the enemies of Great Britain would then, as they will ever, continue, as at present, to urge Ireland to separation. And 4th, if the wealth of the country increased, it would furnish new means to effect a separation; if the country became poorer, its poverty would be a goad to revolt. With regard to the substantial benefits of the British constitution, it is, therefore, neither certain, nor likely, that Ireland would enjoy them equally with Great Britain, after an Union—and with respect to political freedom, it is not possible, in case of an Union, that Ireland should enjoy it; for having given up her separate existence, and submitted to the will of another country, her political freedom would be an impossibility. As well might it be said, that the different portions of Poland, which have been meted out to the several continental powers, possess the same degree of freedom as the respective countries with which they have become incorporated.

By an Union, then, countrymen, the constitution of Ireland is gone for ever. The constitution gone! What then, countrymen, have we been fighting for? For what have we met our deluded fellow-countrymen in arms? Why have we fattened the fields of Wexford, and of Wicklow, and of Kildare, with the blood of Irishmen? Was it that when we had secured to Ireland that constitution under which we had prospered and been happy, we should carry it on the point of our swords to the foot of the British minister, and there re-

sign it for ever? Why did we extort a constitution from the weak and reluctant hand of dominating Britain in 82? Was it that after having played with it for a year or two, we should give it up without a struggle, and return to a state still more ignominious than that from which we emerged? Shall *we* be the only nation in the history of the earth, who, possessing freedom and independence, enlarged commerce, improving agriculture, and a multiplied population, shall resign freely, and without necessity, all these invaluable blessings into the hands of another, and I will add, a rival nation; and say to them—"here we are, take us and ours—we pretend no longer to govern ourselves—you are wiser, and more virtuous than we—give us only food to eat, and raiment to put on, and we will serve you!" No! It cannot, it will not be—it is not in human nature. The nation of valour and wisdom into the notice and admiration of the world, will not in 99, again precipitate itself into voluntary dishonour, and blacken the page of history with the *first* example of a voluntary and untempted surrender of the imperial privileges of freedom and independence—a surrender of them by one nation to another, from whose weakness they had been wrested, and who was unable to revoke them.

(To be continued.)

TO THE
EDITORS OF THE ANTI-UNION.

GENTLEMEN,

A COUNTRY Correspondent of mine, has sent me a copy of the following very curious DREAM, which, if you think proper, you are at liberty to publish in your periodical paper.

I am, Gentlemen,

Your obedient Servant,

CAMILLUS.

I DREAMT I was in Norway; and that I saw there a groupe of men in worn and tattered apparel, but who from their deportment, seemed as if they had seen better days. I questioned one of them, and was informed they were emigrant French nobility; the person I spoke to was the Duke of Richlieu; he said, that he and his companions bore their misfortunes with fortitude; from a consciousness that they had acted according to the dictates of honor, and in support of the ancient constitution of their country.

While we were conversing together, we beheld a ves-

fel crowded with passengers, which approached the shore; we ran to see what unfortunate persons they might be, who thus sought an asylum in this dreary country;—when they disembarked, I fancied I could discern some traces of features I had somewhere seen before, but quite altered by misfortune and want; Richlieu, with that politeness ever peculiar to Frenchmen, welcomed the passengers on shore; and with easy, tho' no way offensive importunity, sought to know who they were, and whence they came; one of them, on behalf of the rest, stepped forward and said, Sir, we are part of the nobility of Barataria, we all possessed great estates in that delightful country, and our ancestors handed down to us therein, a constitution free and independent. Our country was bound in alliance offensive and defensive, with a contiguous powerful nation, to whose aggrandizement she cheerfully contributed both her blood and treasure; the friendly intercourse between the two countries had continued for ages past, and was likely to continue for ages to come; and would have done so, had not the Grand Visir of the nation with whom we were in alliance, fatally disturbed the repose and connection of the two countries; he was a man of insatiable ambition, and possessing the unbounded confidence of the Sultan his master, he formed projects the most extraordinary and chimerical, which neither disappointment, discomfiture, or apparent impracticability, could induce him to relinquish; the consequences were such as might be naturally expected—a great derangement in the finances of the Sultan; the Visir devised various schemes to recruit them; but these all proving inadequate, he at last, at a time when he was at actual war with all the neighbouring nations, determined to use the troops and money of the Sultan, to compel Barataria, his only friend and ally, to surrender her wealth, constitution, and independence, to his absolute direction and disposal. We then were most of us at the court of the Sultan, as many of us then had estates in both countries; the Visir sent for us, and explained to us the nature of his plan, and desired our co-operation to accomplish it; we hesitated—but he had the means of quieting all our scruples; his promises were liberal, and we bowed obedience to his will; on our return to Barataria, we found that some disturbances had taken place there, which had been fomented by the emissaries of the Visir, but tranquillity had been restored; this was thought to be the favorable moment to deprive our country of its constitution and independence. To forward the views of the Visir we repaired to our estates and represented to our tenants and vassals, and those persons living in their vicinage, the great advantages and benefits, that would arise from an implicit obedience to the Visir's will; and we strongly recommended the surrender he required; but we were mortified to find that they scouted us with scorn; and every where unanimously resolved to support the independence of Barataria; we were, however, not dismayed; we thought if we could make a majority of

the Grand Council, that the troops of the Visir would afterwards settle the business;—We carried the question:—And the sons of Barataria seemed to submit to the degradation of their country; but this was only a state of torpor; it resembled a calm that precedes a storm; and when we thought the nation buried in apathy—a tempest of indignation burst forth, that convulsed the nation from north to south, from east to west; the people recovered their freedom; expelled us the country, and confiscated our estates; we fled to the Sultan's court, hoping to receive from the Grand Visir, compensation for our losses in Barataria, and the performance of his other promises: But alas! Sir, how uncertain is human policy! and how fleeting is the power of courtiers!—Ere we arrived, news had reached the court, of the disastrous turn affairs had taken in Barataria, and the loss of her alliance; which so exasperated the populace, and occasioned such a ferment round the Sultan's palace, that to appease the tumult, he was obliged to send them the Grand Visir's head: but this was not all; in the paroxysm of their rage, they required that all those should be attainted as traitors, who were any way instrumental in assisting the Visir in these projects which occasioned the loss of the alliance of Barataria; in consequence we were driven from the dominions of the Sultan, and our property there confiscated. We embarked on board the first ship, and met with a dreadful storm; the ship became unmanageable, and we were driven on this coast; Alas! Sir, we are now unfortunate emigrants like yourselves, and as brothers in adversity we claim your friendship. At these words Richlieu stepped back, and with a look of anger, mixed with scorn, said: You our brothers!—You emigrants like us!—We disclaim you!—In nought you resemble us!—Your country had an ancient, free constitution, you conspired with the Visir of another nation to destroy it! Your endeavours were to overturn, not to support, the ancient order of things: By your own statement, your conduct seems to have been corrupt and profligate in the extreme, and you were most deservedly expelled from Barataria; go hide your disgrace in the inmost recesses of the neighbouring forest! But do not dare, by your presence, to pollute the abode of honor, and the French emigrants.

At these words, I started and awoke.

W. Z.

EPIGRAM.

WHY should we exclaim that the times are so bad?
 Pursuing a querulous strain,
 When Erin gives up ALL the Rights that she had,
 What right will she have to complain?